

Table Rock Wilderness Trail and Trailhead Project Finding of No Significant Impact

Environmental Assessment Number OR-080-01-13

Introduction

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has conducted an environmental analysis (See attached Environmental Assessment Number OR-080-01-13) of one action alternative and one no action alternative for lands within Table Rock Wilderness, located in Township 7 South, Ranges 3 and 4 East, Willamette Meridian. The proposed action is to reestablish safe and reasonable access to Table Rock Wilderness and Peachuck Lookout. A major flood event in 1996 caused road damage that required the closure of road segments accessing two trailheads, one into Table Rock Wilderness and one to Peachuck Lookout.

Implementation of the proposed action would conform to management actions and direction contained in the *Salem District Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan* (ROD/RMP), dated May 1995, which is tiered to and incorporates the analysis contained in the *Salem District Proposed Resource Management Plan /Final Environmental Impact Statement* (RMP/FEIS), dated September 1994. The ROD/RMP provides a comprehensive ecosystem management strategy in conformance with the *Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement on Management of Habitat for Late-Successional and Old-Growth Related Species Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl* (February 1994) and the *Record of Decision for Amendments to Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management Planning Documents Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl and Standards and Guidelines for Management of Habitat for Late-Successional and Old-Growth Related Species Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl* (April 1994). The proposed action would also comply with management goals and objectives in the *Table Rock Wilderness Management Plan* (February, 1987), for providing adequate portal facilities for the use and enjoyment of the wilderness area while still protecting resource values and wilderness character.

The environmental assessment (EA) is attached to and incorporated by reference in this Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) determination. The EA and FONSI will be made available for public review from **July 20th, 2001 to August 10th, 2001.**

The notice for public comment will be published in a legal notice by local newspapers of general circulation including the *Oregonian* and the *Molalla Pioneer*. The FONSI and EA will also be sent to potentially affected or interested individuals, organizations, and agencies and posted on the Internet at **<http://www.or.blm.gov/salem/html/planning/index.htm>**.

Comments received in the Salem District Office **on or before August 10, 2001 at 4:00 PM, Pacific Daylight Saving Time**, will be considered in the final decision which is expected to be issued by **August 15th, 2001.**

Based upon review of the EA and supporting documents, I have determined that the proposed

action (Alternative A) is not a major federal action and will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment, individually or cumulatively with other actions in the general area. No environmental effects meet the definition of significance in context or intensity as defined in 40 CFR 1508.27. Therefore, an environmental impact statement is not needed. This finding is based on the following discussion:

Context: A major flood event in 1996 caused road damage that required the closure of road segments accessing two trailheads, one into Table Rock Wilderness and one to Peachuck Lookout (See Project Map). The road segment leading to Table Rock Trailhead was evaluated and found to be too unstable for long term repairs. As a result, visitors must now traverse along a mile of Table Rock Road to reach the old Table Rock Trailhead. A slide also occurred along Rooster Rock Road restricting vehicle access to the Peachuck Lookout Trailhead requiring visitors to hike over two miles on an existing road to reach the trailhead (See Project Map). These two slides have significantly reduced access to the Table Rock Wilderness. Work on trails and trailheads is needed reestablish safe and reasonable access to both the Table Rock Wilderness and Peachuck Lookout.

The proposed action would entail 3,500 feet of trail construction for the proposed Wapiti Trail and 4,000 feet of trail maintenance and realignment work on an existing trail for the proposed Rooster Rock Trail (See Project Map). Also proposed are two new trailheads to replace those lost in the 1996 flood, and improvements to an existing trailhead (See Project Map). The trail and trailhead work would help maintain access for recreational opportunities of the wilderness and would help reduce the development of undesigned trails established by visitors trying to gain access to the wilderness without hiking a road.

The EA details the effects of the proposed action. None of the effects identified, including direct, indirect and cumulative effects, are considered to be significant and do not exceed those effects described in the RMP/FEIS.

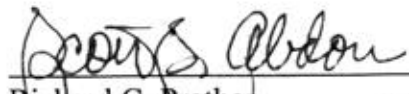
Intensity: The following discussion is organized around the “Ten Significance Criteria” described in 40 CFR 1508.27.

- 1. Impacts may be both beneficial and adverse.** The predicted environmental effects on the six relevant elements of the environment (e.g., recreation/visuals, soils/minerals, wildlife, vegetation, water/fisheries/riparian, and socio-economics) are considered to be beneficial for the public at large because the proposed improvements would help provide for the use and enjoyment of Table Rock Wilderness in a manner more consistent with a wilderness setting, while still providing for the long-term protection and preservation of the area’s wilderness character and other resource management objectives (See EA pages 10-13).
- 2. The degree to which the selected alternative will affect public health or safety.** The proposed action should improve public health and safety, by providing adequate parking facilities for passenger and horse trailer vehicles (See EA page 10).

3. **Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farm lands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas.** No significant negative impacts to cultural resources or the wilderness character of Table Rock Wilderness are expected (See EA page 10-13).
4. **The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial.** The predicted effects are not expected to be highly controversial. The proposed project was published in Salem District Project Update in September and December of 2000 and again in March of 2001. No comments or concerns related to the proposed project were received. A complete disclosure of the predicted effects of the proposed action is contained in the EA (See EA pages 10-13).
5. **The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.** There are no predicted effects on the human environment which are considered to be highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.
6. **The degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration.** The proposed action does not set a precedent for future actions that may have significant effects nor does it represent a decision in principle about future consideration.
7. **Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts.** No significant cumulative effects are expected and a complete disclosure of the effects of the proposed action is contained in the EA (See EA pages 10-13).
8. **The degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or other objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources.** The proposed action would enhance the public's ability to enjoy and appreciate the historic Peachuck Lookout, by providing access (non-motorized or non-mechanized) through a wilderness setting rather than hiking along a developed road (See EA Pages 10,12). No adverse affects to Peachuck Lookout, Historic Table Rock Trail, or other cultural/historical resources are expected (See EA Pages 11,13).
9. **The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act of 1973.** No significant adverse affects to endangered or threatened species are affected as a result of the implementation of the proposed action (See EA Pages 12,13).

10. **Whether the action threatens a violation of Federal, State, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.** The proposed action does not violate any known Federal, State, or local law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment. State, local, and tribal interests were given the opportunity to participate in the environmental analysis process. Additionally, the proposed action is consistent with applicable land management plans, policies, and programs.

Approved by:



Richard C. Prather

Cascades Field Manager

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JUL 19 2001

Date